



The Food Stamp News

A BHCE/BIMA Publication

Spring 2003

Coming Soon: A new look and name for The Food Stamp News

By Dave Hippler, Editor



Due to the raging success of the Food Stamp News, the Division of Health Care Financing is changing the name and scope of this

newsletter. In the next edition, the name will change to **The Income Maintenance Times** and will include news and tips for both the Food Stamp and Medicaid programs. The newsletter will continue to notify IM workers of FS trainings, case processing tips, and CARES and policy changes, but we'll start adding Medicaid information as well. Look for the changes in the Summer 2003 edition.

ES Day Conference In Rock County

By Linda Konsella, PAC Trainer

On January 27, in anticipation of Economic Support Specialist Day, Rock County Human Services held a mini-conference for their staff. The morning began with a General Session, with Mary McBride as keynote speaker. McBride has been a writer for both Phyllis Diller and Joan Rivers. In addition, she is a published author of numerous books, including *Please Don't Call Me Collect on Mother's Day*.

Staff had an opportunity to participate in three workshops throughout the day.

There were workshops that covered the scope of Economic Support. Those topics included Alerts, Rock County Mental Health

and AODA, Clutter Clinic, Mandatory Reporting Requirements and Unemployment Compensation. The presenters were Sharon Oldenburg, Denny Luster, Mary Dikkeboom, Mary Van Dyke and Amy Banicki.

The PAC Team was invited to participate and present on topics related to The Food Stamp Program. Marsha Bush, Melody August, and Linda Konsella presented workshops on Prospective Budgeting, Benefit Recovery, Crossmatches, Documentation & Verification, and Food Stamp Expenses. The staff enjoyed the time to review policy and procedures and to be refreshed on the policy that they use day to day. They were very open and receptive to the PAC workshops.

The staff were recognized with a cake during their



afternoon break. Rock County should be commended for providing this educational opportunity to their staff. The PAC Team would also like to thank Rock County for allowing them to share this experience.

Alien Eligibility

by Judy Johnson

The Farm Bill was passed last year and with it came changes

related to alien eligibility. Currently, the State has chosen to fund the State Option Food Stamp Program. This program provides benefits to qualified aliens who otherwise do not meet eligibility for federal

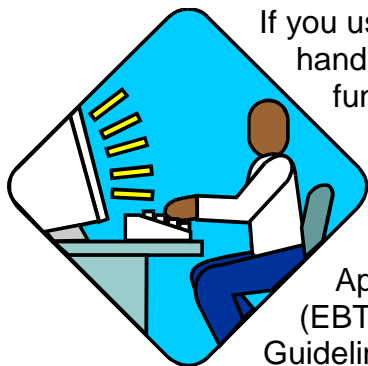


food stamp benefits. With the Farm Bill, many of those qualified aliens will regain eligibility for federal benefits. Beginning on 10/1/02, any alien in a qualified status that is blind or disabled regained eligibility. Effective 4/1/03, aliens who have been in a qualified status for 5 years in the U.S. will regain eligibility for the federal program.

It is extremely important for agency workers to be sure that the status codes and dates of entry are correct on ANAR. Agencies can reference [Chapter 25](#) of the FS Handbook Appendix. Please remind agency staff to call the SAVE system to verify that the information is correct in CARES.

Food Stamp Handbook Tips - Searching 101

By Dave Hippler, FS Handbook Writer



If you use the FS online handbook's "Search" function, it will find text written on each of the web pages that make up the online handbook. However, Appendix Chapters 24 (EBT) and 25 (Processing Guidelines) were not made

into web pages because they contain screen shots and those didn't convert well to web pages. What that means is that information in those chapters won't show up in a normal search. To search for something in those chapters, you must go to those sections specifically, click on the link that opens the pdf document, and then use the find function (the binocular icon) to search for information in those chapters.

QA CORNER

by Marcia Williamson, QA Specialist – Advanced

"NEWMAN"

The State QC Unit is using a new system, called "Newman", for tracking payment accuracy starting with federal fiscal 2003. Newman tracks all cases selected, as did the old system, but has a more sophisticated way of telling us about the errors types, nature, and causes of those errors. Knowing more specifics about each error can help us direct our energies in ways to improve overall accuracy.

The local agency second party review process also uses the same data system, as does the state Payment Accuracy Consultants (PAC) Team. The results of state QA, local QA, and PAC are not commingled because the cases are not all selected randomly. It will be beneficial, however, to be able to look at all three projects to see where they are similar.

Using the same terms and kinds of reports will make discussion between state and local staff more fruitful. We are looking forward to not just saying "Oh shucks, there is a lot of earned income error." Rather we'd like to say, for example, "20% of earned income error was caused by failure to act on reported information," or "3% earned income error was caused by wrong interpretation of state policy," which would give clearer indicators on how to attack each problem.

Training Section News

By Staci Wanty, FS Training Lead

Independent Learning

For new, independent learning opportunities, check out the BPS Training Section web site at

www.dwd.state.wi.us/destrain/trainsec.

New courses that can be accessed on-line include *SSI Auto-Update Self-Study Guide* and *Medical Expenses for FS Self-Study Guide*. We recommend that workers review the guides independently and that supervisors utilize them during agency staff meetings.

The Pro Shop is another resource for reviewing FS Program changes. The April 1, 2003 Pro Shop, located at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/destrain/proshop/default.htm>, reviews Operations Memo 03-10, covering the Food Stamp Only Application.

Upcoming Training

Follow-up Workshop: Kids to CARES to Case Comments/Working 9 to 5... Not! is a one-day classroom training intended for experienced workers. Through hands-on simulation of Food



Stamp intakes, reviews and reported changes, workers will continue development of critical thinking skills necessary for the access and analysis of earned and unearned income sources for Food Stamp eligibility determinations, accurately budget this income information and clearly document the process that was followed. This course is recommended to help increase payment accuracy. Use the BPS Registration Center at <http://www.uwosh.edu/ccdet/wss> to register for this course.

Immigrant/Migrant Self-Study Guide and Refresher training will also be

offered this summer. Check out the What's New section of the BPS Registration Center to find out when this course and others are available.



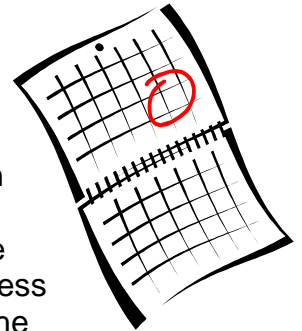
FS Policy/CARES Update – April 2003

By Sara Pynenberg, FS Policy Analyst

Here are some CARES projects and FS policy changes currently in the works for the second quarter of 2003:

April 2003

1. CARES enhancements are being made to screen CMCR to allow the worker alert sort to be frozen for the day unless the worker changes the sort.
2. CARES enhancements are being made to add long text “help” information for selected alerts.
3. SSI Auto-update follow up:
 - Driver flows will no longer automatically include AFUI if there is no unearned income in CARES (this was caused by the default “Y” switch in the income available field).
 - DX verification codes on screen ANBR will no longer be blanked out in the driver flows.
4. Asset policy changes:
 - All real property on screen AARP will be excluded as assets in the FS eligibility determination.
 - Verification of liquid assets entered on screen AALA will no longer be required unless the information is questionable.



May 2003

1. An alert will be created to identify W2/FS companion cases.
2. If W2 information is changed by the W2 worker and the FS worker does not run SFED and confirm FS eligibility, the FS

case will be triggered to run eligibility and confirm FS at adverse action.

3. A FS request indicator will be added to CRIN/CRES to protect the FS filing date and priority service determination.
4. An alert will be created to identify when a FS recipient becomes a licensed, certified, or provisionally certified Child Care Provider.
5. A field will be added to CARES screen AFDU for worker entry of SSI PASS account amount.

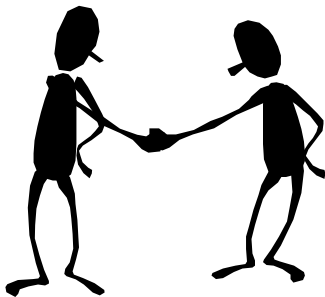
June 2003

1. Creation of mini-driver flows for reported changes in address/shelter costs and income.
2. Enhancements to CARES screen AFDE to allow more accurate prospective earned income calculations.

All dates for these changes are tentative and subject to change. Look for more information regarding these system improvements in the FS Handbook , DXBM's, or Operations Memos soon!

2003 Food Stamp Supervisor Forums

By Mike McKenzie, FS Policy and Planning Section Chief



Whatever happened to that long list of problems we identified for the State to fix at the Income Maintenance (IM) Workload Symposium in February 2002?

What kind of services do the regional Payment Accuracy Consultants (PACs) provide?

How are cases selected for QC review?

These are the types of questions that were answered at the four Supervisor Forums held around the state in March.

The forums were held in Wisconsin Dells on March 12, Hayward on March 18, Stevens Point on March 19 and Waukesha on March 26.

Approximately 170 local agency staff were given the opportunity by their management to learn of upcoming changes to the IM programs and to discuss current, relevant issues with other agency staff as well as state program staff. The information from these forums has been compiled, and agency concerns and suggestions will be shared with State IM management. We also plan to send a summary of questions and answers, as well as other relevant information shared at the forums, to all local agency contacts via email in May.

Thanks to those local agency participants that attended and provided feedback on the topics presented. And thanks to the managers that found a way to allow their staff to attend – we know how valuable every hour at the office is these days. The evaluations that participants completed indicated that the forums were extremely valuable to agency staff that attended.



Here is one participant's comment that I found heartening:

“I was very surprised and pleased with the forum. I was expecting the focus to be directed at what our beleaguered ES do wrong.

Instead, it was informative, positive and provided the supervisors with an opportunity to vent. While venting at the FS staff wasn't the appropriate target, it still provided an outlet for all of us, and helped us all put our current situation in perspective.”

One of the best ways to deal with difficult issues is honest, open communication. I believe forums like the ones offered this March help to keep the lines of communication open. There were many positive changes to the IM programs and systems accomplished in the past year, with considerable local agency input through the Income Maintenance Advisory Committee (IMAC) and other workgroups and email groups. To access the latest information regarding IMAC and sub-committee meetings and minutes go to <http://www.imac.state.wi.us/>. These committees include State and local agency representatives committed to improving IM program administration. We hope to be able to continue to provide similar supervisor forums in the future, but in the meantime I encourage you to visit the IMAC web site for the latest information on program improvement activities.

2003 BIG TEN Food Stamp Program Improvement Conference

By Lisa Hanson, Corrective Action Manager

A Whole New Ballgame

Wisconsin is hosting the 13th Annual Midwest Region “BIG TEN” Conference, August 20-22, 2003. This conference will be replacing our regular annual food stamp conference for 2003. The “BIG TEN” is a federal, state, and local office effort to improve food stamp payment accuracy and customer service.

BIG TEN conferences provide an excellent opportunity for states to share their successes and best practices with one another. Unfortunately due to other state and federal government attendees', Wisconsin will be required to limit the number of individuals from our own state. Agencies will be notified about mid May of how many they will be allowed to send to the conference from their agency.

Newsletter Team

Editor: Dave Hippler

Contributing Members: Sara Pynenberg, Lisa Hanson, Staci Wanty, Marcia Williamson, Judy Johnson, Mike McKenzie, and Linda Konsella.

Send articles or comments to Dave Hippler at <mailto:hippldc@dhfs.state.wi.us>